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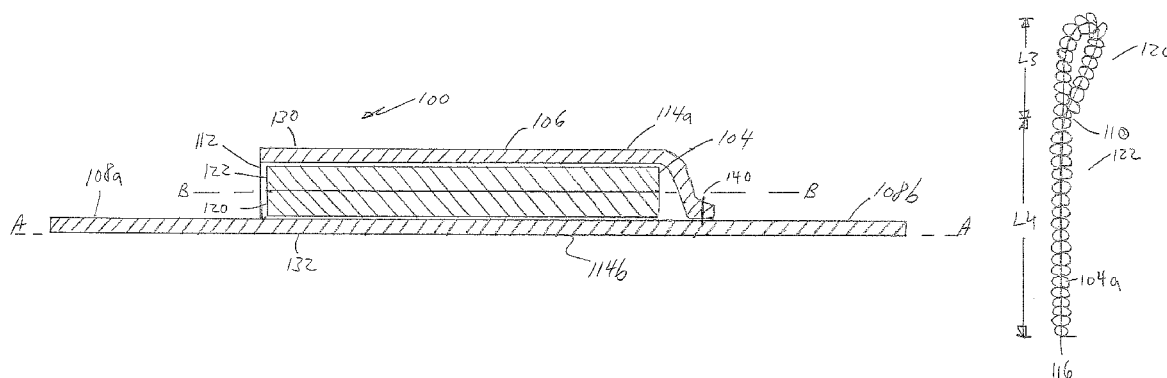
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A support for use with a pillow on a mattress and a method for use thereof are disclosed. The support includes a sham extending longitudinally along an axis. The sham has a pocket having three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side. The sham has extensions extending longitudinally from the pocket. The extensions are constructed to extend around sides and at least a portion of the bottom of a mattress. The pocket is constructed to receive a pillow therein. The method includes providing such a sham and extending the extensions around the sides and under a portion of the mattress.

19 Claims, 5 Drawing Sheets



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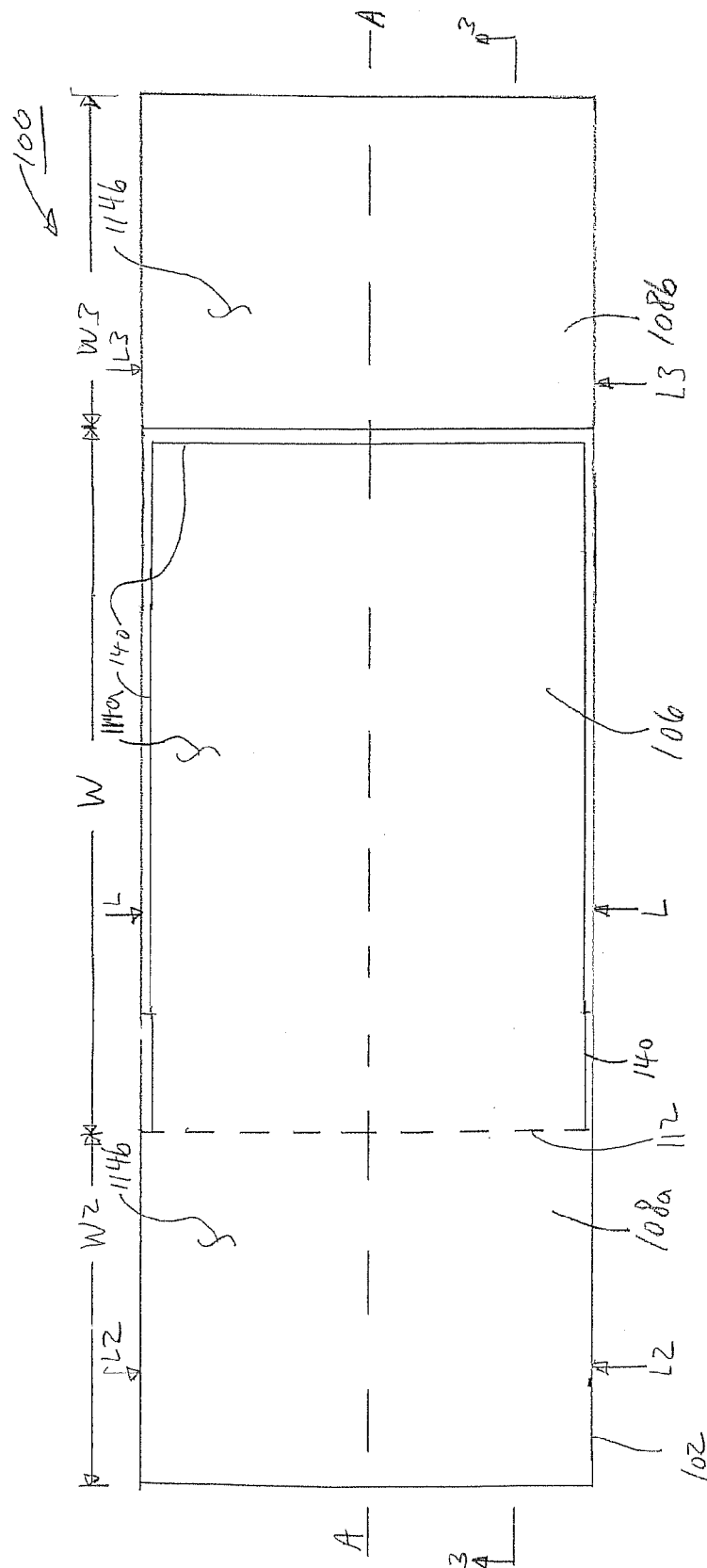


FIG. 1

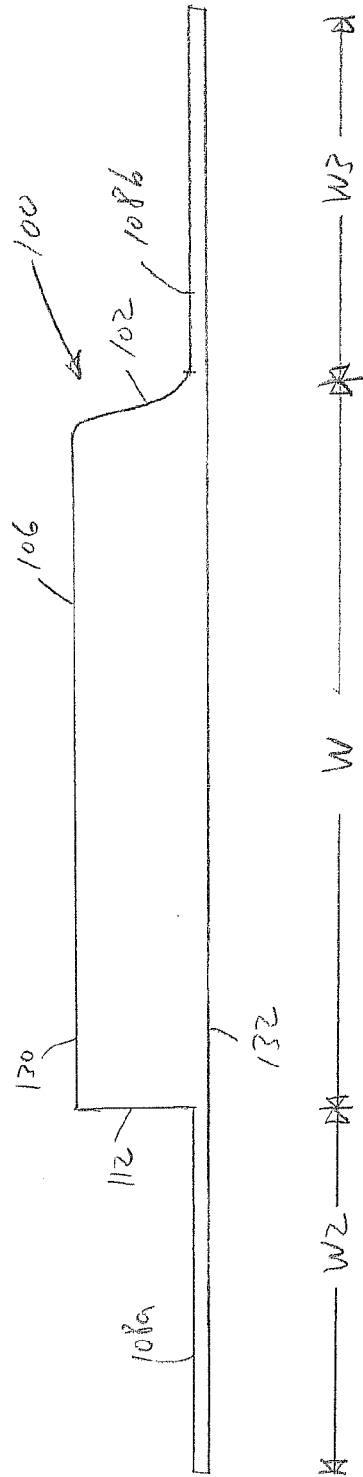


FIG. 2

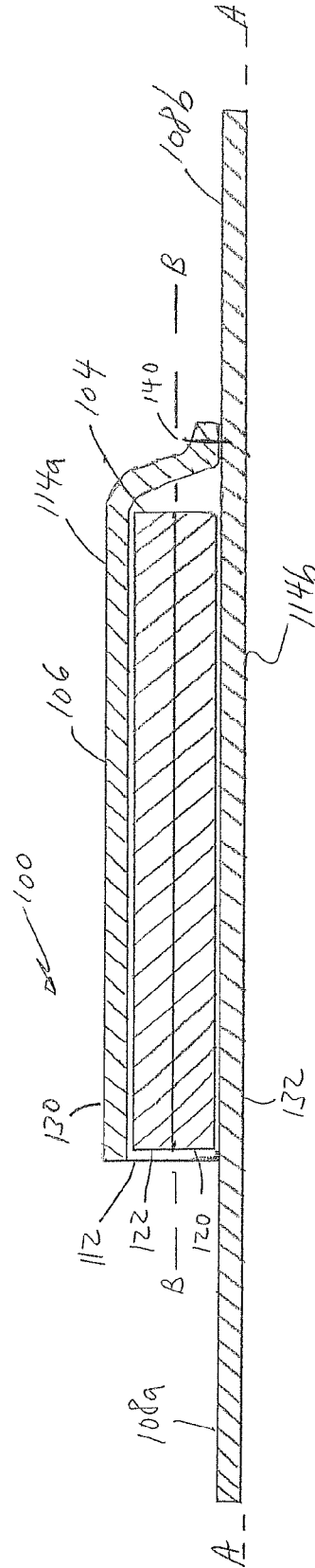


FIG. 3

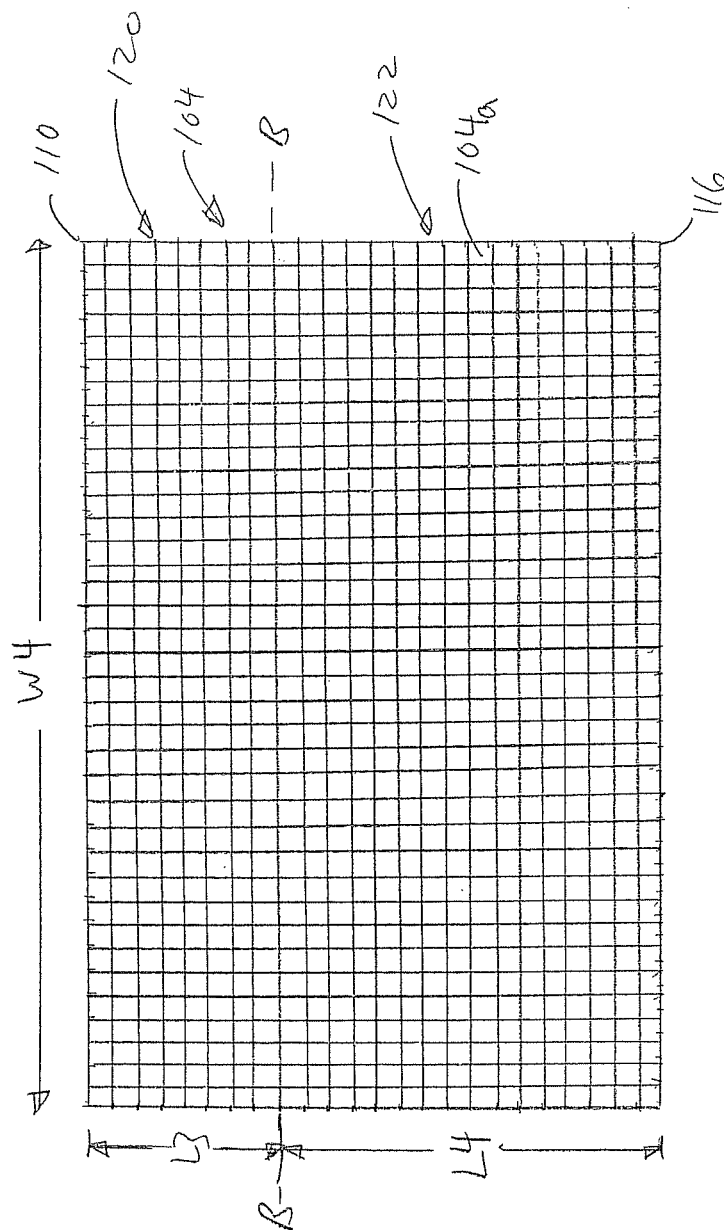


FIG. 4

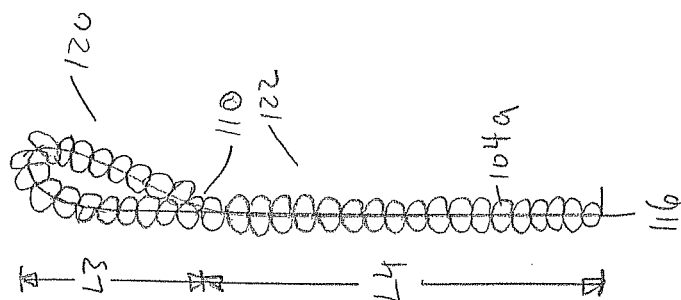
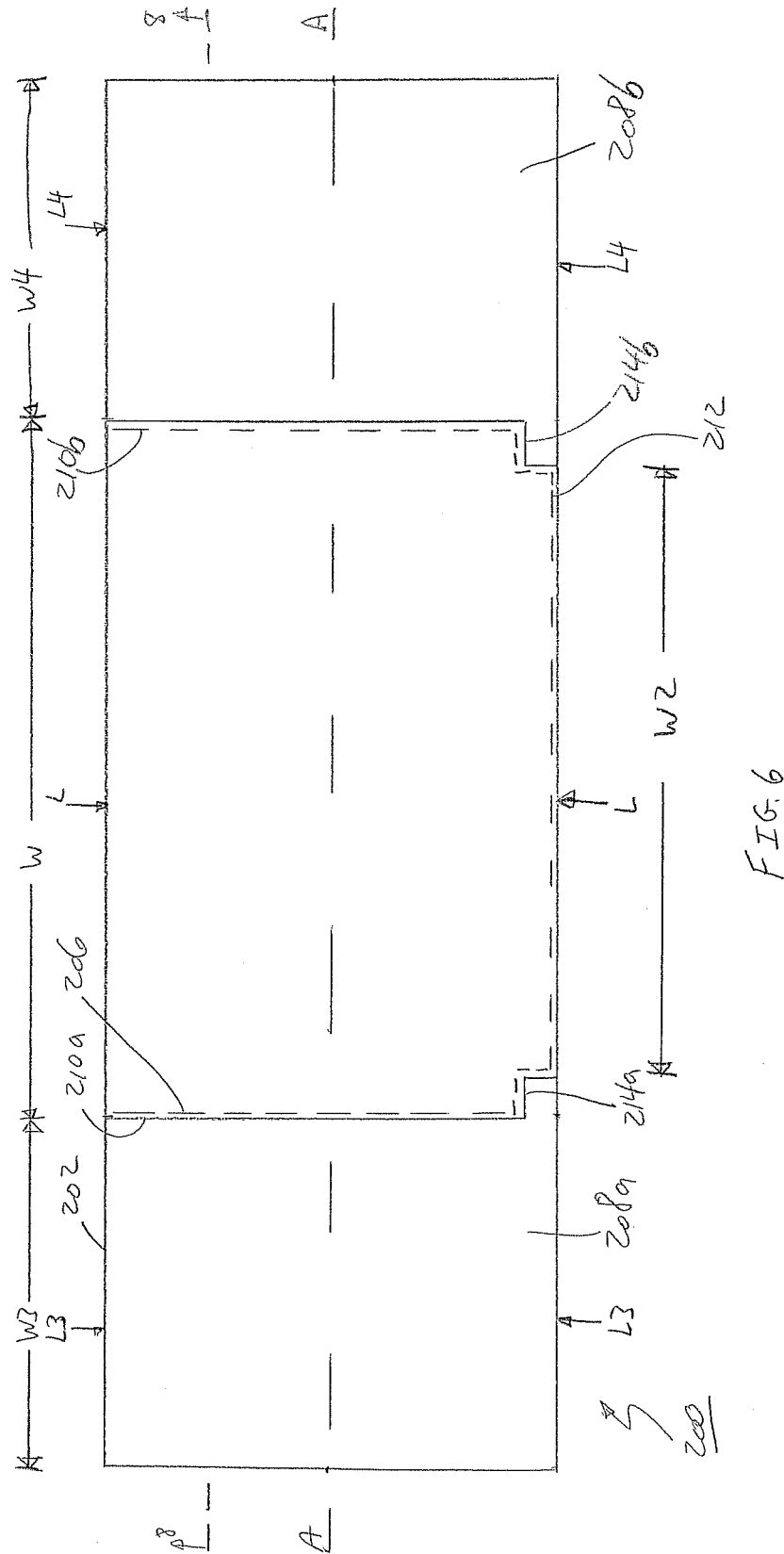


FIG. 5



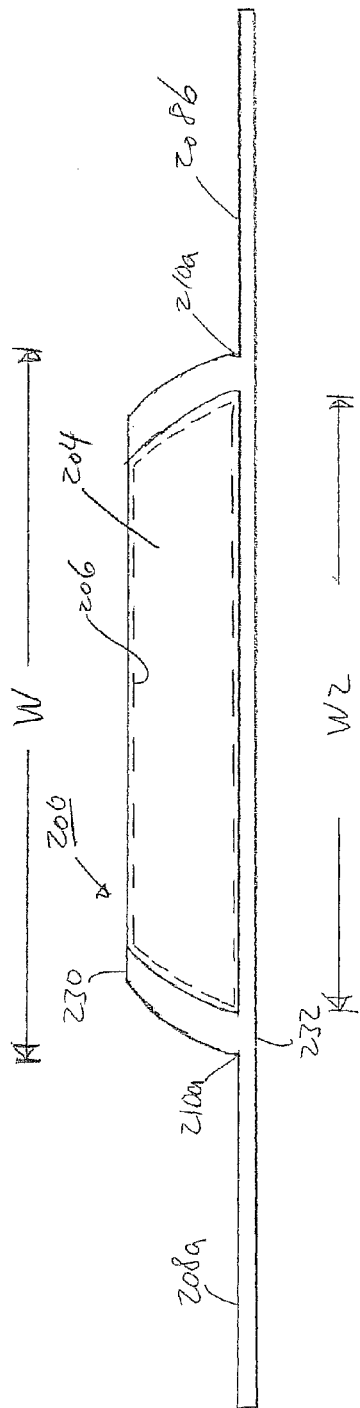


Fig. 7

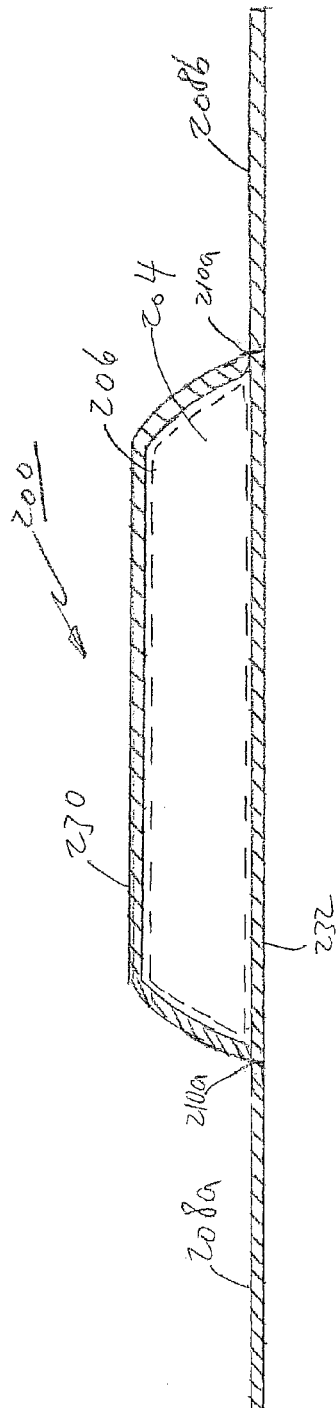


FIG. 8

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SUPPORT FOR RELIEF OF PRESSURE ULCERS

BACKGROUND

1. Field

The following disclosure relates broadly to supports having retention elements for use on a mattress where the supports can be used for relieving or avoiding the development of pressure ulcers. More particularly, the disclosure relates to supports that are easily arranged and deployed for the avoidance of heel ulcers and sacral decubitus, and methods of using the same.

2. State of the Art

In settings such as rehabilitation centers, hospitals, and nursing homes, patients are frequently bedridden. Bedridden patients, the elderly, and anyone else whose mobility is highly limited often develop foot, leg, and back ulcers due to poor blood circulation resulting from narrowed arteries and damage to small blood vessels caused by diseases such as long-standing diabetes, and by the sheer weight of portions of the body on the bed. Ulcers are breaks in the layers of the skin that fail to heal due to poor circulation and regeneration of tissue, and often progress in these patients. Pressure ulcers can lead to gangrene and complications thereof. Treatment of such ulcers can also be very costly.

Reducing the extent of contact between the back and buttocks of a patient and a mattress can help to prevent onset of sacral decubitus in the sacral region and can assist the patient's body in healing in the sacral area. Also, reducing the extent of contact between the heel and a mattress can help prevent onset of pressure ulcers in the heel region and can assist the patient's heel in healing.

SUMMARY

According to one aspect, a support for use with a pillow on a mattress includes a sham extending longitudinally along an axis with the sham having a longitudinal pocket having three substantially closed sides and one at least partially open side, and extensions (flaps) extending longitudinally from the pocket that are constructed to wrap around sides and at least a portion of the bottom of the mattress. The longitudinal pocket is constructed to receive a pillow therein. For purposes herein, the term "pillow" is to be understood to be broad and encompass both a traditional cloth bag stuffed with foam, feathers, or other soft material, as well as other cushioning or bolstering elements such as air cushions that can provide support or elevation for a body part.

In another aspect, a method of fixing a support to a mattress includes providing a support having a sham extending longitudinally along an axis where the sham has a pocket having three substantially closed sides and one at least partially open side, and extensions (flaps) extending longitudinally from the pocket, inserting a pillow through the one at least partially open side of the pocket into the pocket, and wrapping the extensions around sides and at least a portion of the bottom of the mattress.

In one embodiment, the pocket extends substantially across the entire width of a typical hospital bed mattress. In one embodiment, the at least one partially open side of the pocket is perpendicular to the long axis of the pocket. In another embodiment, the at least one partially open side of the pocket is parallel to the long axis of the pocket.

In one embodiment, a pillow for use with the support is substantially the same length and width of the pocket. In one embodiment particularly useful for preventing or treating

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heel ulcers, the pillow is at least approximately six inches high and is made either of dense foam that does not substantially collapse or of a plastic bubble-wrap-type material that is rolled into a bolster of at least approximately six inches high.

In another embodiment particularly useful for preventing or treating sacral decubitus, the pillow is approximately one inch high where it is intended to extend under a buttocks of a patient, and approximately two inches high where it is intended to extend under the small of the back of the patient.

According to one aspect, the length of the support (perpendicular the long axis) is sufficiently small such that the support may be located and moved along the length of a mattress to a desired location depending upon the height of the patient and the location of the ulcer on the patient.

A more complete understanding will become apparent to those skilled in the art upon reference to the detailed description taken in conjunction with the provided figures.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top plan view of a support in accordance with an aspect of the invention.

FIG. 2 is a front side elevation view of the support shown in FIG. 1.

FIG. 3 is a section view of the support of FIG. 1 along section 3-3 in FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a top plan view of an embodiment of a pillow in accordance with an aspect of the invention.

FIG. 5 is a side elevation view of the pillow shown in FIG. 4.

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of a leg support in accordance with an aspect of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a front side elevation view of the leg support shown in FIG. 6.

FIG. 8 is a section view of the leg support of FIG. 6 along section 8-8 in FIG. 6.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of a support 100. The support 100 includes a sham 102 that is arranged to receive a pillow 104 (FIGS. 4 and 5) positionable in a pocket or sleeve 106 of the sham 102. The sham 102 includes a pair of extensions or flaps 108a, 108b that extend axially from opposite sides of the pocket 106 along longitudinal axis A-A. The pocket 106 has a side opening 112 perpendicular to longitudinal axis A-A through which the pillow 104 is introduced. The pocket 106 has three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side and is constructed to receive and retain the pillow 104.

In one embodiment, the sham is formed by laying one layer of material 114a (FIGS. 1 and 3) atop a larger layer of material 114b (FIGS. 1 and 3) and stitching them together on three sides to form seam 140, thereby creating the pocket 106 with the side opening 112.

The pocket 106 has a width (W), which, in at least one embodiment, is substantially equal to the width of a hospital bed mattress. For example, the width (W) of the pocket 106 can be between substantially 28 and 39 inches. Typically, for most hospital-type beds, the width (W) of the pocket will be substantially 30 or 36 inches. In one embodiment, the pocket 106 has a length (L) between substantially 18 and 23 inches.

FIG. 2 shows a front side elevation view of the support 100 and FIG. 3 shows a view of the support 100 along section 3-3 in FIG. 1. In one embodiment the lengths (L2) and (L3) of each of the extensions 108a, 108b can be between 18 and 23

inches. In one other embodiment, the lengths (L2) and (L3) of the extensions **108a**, **108b** are the same as the length (L) of the pocket **106**. In one embodiment, the combined (added) width of the widths (W2) and (W3) of the extensions **108a**, **108b** is substantially equal to the width (W) of the pocket **106**. In one embodiment, the widths (W2) and (W3) of the extensions **108a**, **108b** are the same. In one embodiment, the combined widths (W2) and (W3) of the extensions **108a**, **108b** and the width (W) of the pocket **106** is between 62 and 84 inches. Generally, the pocket width is chosen to extend across the width of the mattress, and the extensions are sized to extend around the sides of the mattress and far enough under the mattress such that the weight of the patient on the mattress and therefore on the support extensions will prevent the support from being displaced from its intended position under the patient. Thus, in one embodiment, the extensions are sized to extend around the sides of the mattress and under at least a majority of the width of the bottom of the mattress.

FIG. 4 shows a top plan view of one pillow **104** particularly useful for preventing or relieving sacral decubitus. Pillow **104** is shown as being formed of an air cushion material having a plurality of regularly spaced air cells **104a** arranged in a grid or matrix. Each air cell **104a** is formed of a pair of oppositely spaced layers of plastic that are sealed together forming a pocket that is filled with air or other inert gas. In one embodiment, each air cell **104a** is about 1.5 inches wide and 2 inches in length and 1 inch thick (high). The air cells **104a** are constructed so that when a portion of the patient's body lies on the cushion, the air cells **104a** will distribute the applied weight without the air cells **104a** being becoming fully compressed (i.e., the air pressure is large enough to prevent opposing inner walls of the cells from contacting each other).

In at least one embodiment, the air cushion material is bent or formed to curve into a desired shape. For example, in the embodiment shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, the air cushion material is curved to conform to curves of the back and/or buttocks of a patient to relieve or prevent onset of sacral decubitus. In the embodiment shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, the pillow has a curved portion **120** and a generally flat portion **122**. The curved portion **120** may be formed by taking a first end **110** and folding it back over a portion of the body of the pillow and attaching it along axis B-B, e.g., by thermal welding. In this way, at least some of the curved portion **120** will be at least twice the height of the flat portion **122**. The flat portion **122** extends from axis B-B to a second end **116**. The total length (L3) of the curved portion **120** and the length (L4) of the flat portion **122** is less than or equal to the length (L) of the pocket **106**. For example, in one embodiment, the length (L3) of the curved portion **120** is about 6 inches and the length (L4) of the flat portion **120** is about 12 inches and the length (L) of the pocket is 18 inches. Also, the pillow **104** has a width (W4) that is less than or equal to the width (W) of the pocket **106** of sham **102**. As shown in FIG. 3, the pillow **104** is disposed in the pocket **106** so that axis B-B is parallel to axis A-A.

In use, the pillow **104** is inserted into the pocket **106** through opening **112** and the support **100** is placed horizontally across the top of the mattress (not shown) of a bed (not shown) so that the pocket **106** and the pillow **104** are positioned between the sides of the mattress. Typically, the sham and pillow are located underneath a bottom sheet that is used to cover the mattress. The support **100** may be placed so that a top surface **130** (FIGS. 2 and 3) is face down on the mattress and a bottom surface **132** (FIGS. 2 and 3) is face up on the bed. Also, the support **100** is oriented so that the curved portion **120** of the pillow **104** is directed toward the head end of the bed and the flat portion **122** is directed toward the foot end of the bed. The extensions **108a**, **108b** are wrapped around the

sides of the mattress and tucked under at least a portion of the bottom of the mattress to retain the support **100** in place with respect to the mattress. When the support **100** is so positioned, a patient can lay over the support **100** on the mattress and be supported by the pillow **104** in the pocket **106**. More specifically, when the pillow **104** is formed as shown in FIGS. 4 and 5, the support **100** can be located across the mattress at an appropriate position along the length of the mattress so that the curve of the lower back of the patient is located over the curved portion **120** and the position of the buttocks of the patient is located over the flat portion **122** to cushion those portions to relieve or avoid the development of sacral decubitus. Furthermore, with the extensions **108a**, **108b** so wrapped around the mattress, it will be appreciated that extension **108a** blocks opening **112** so that the pillow **104** is retained in the pocket **106** and cannot be removed from the pocket **106** without untucking the extension **108a**. If needed, the entire support can be slid up or down the length of the mattress to an appropriate position. In one embodiment, the layers of material **114a**, **114b** are formed of a material that permits the sham to slide easily over the mattress and under a bottom sheet on the mattress. For example, the layers **114a** and **114b** can be formed of a synthetic material such as nylon.

In another embodiment, the support **100** is placed so that a top surface **130** is face up on the bed and a bottom surface **132** is face down on the mattress and the extensions **108a**, **108b** are wrapped around the sides of the mattress and tucked under at least a majority of the width of the bottom of mattress. With the extensions **108a**, **108b** so wrapped around the mattress, it will be appreciated that access to the pillow **104** is not blocked by extension **108a**, thus permitting insertion and removal of the pillow **104** from the pocket **106** without untucking the extension **108a**.

The extensions **108a**, **108b** may include fasteners for attachment to each other or to mating fasteners on a bed or the sheets on the bed. For example, in one embodiment, the extensions **108a**, **108b** include snap closures or hook and loop fasteners (not shown) such that the extensions can wrap around the mattress and the closures or fasteners can connect to each other. Also, instead of connecting the extensions **108a**, **108b** together, in at least one other embodiment, the bed (not shown) includes fasteners that can connect to fasteners on the extensions **108a**, **108b**.

In one embodiment, the sham **102** is made from a material that can be cleaned with antiseptic solution without being laundered with hospital bed linen. In one embodiment, the sham **102** is made of a synthetic material, such as polyester or nylon, which may be cleaned with an antiseptic such as an alcohol wipe and which may also be laundered. Such a sham has the added benefit as previously disclosed of being easily slid under and over a mattress (and under sheets).

FIG. 6 shows another embodiment of a support **200**. The support **200** includes a sham **202**, which is constructed to receive and retain a pillow **204** (FIGS. 6 and 7). The sham **202** includes a pair of extensions **208a**, **208b** that extend axially along longitudinal axis A-A from opposite sides of a pocket **206** formed by a first layer **230** and a second layer **232**. Layers **230** and **232** are connected together along side seams **210a** and **210b**. The extensions extend substantially from side seams **210a**, **210b**.

The pocket **206** is constructed to receive and retain the pillow **204**. The pocket **206** has a width (W) in the axial direction, which, in at least one embodiment, is less than or equal to the width of a hospital bed mattress. For example, in one embodiment the width (W) of the pocket **206** can be between 29 and 39 inches. In one embodiment, the pocket **206**

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has a length (L), in a direction transverse to the axial direction, which is between 18 and 23 inches.

Also, the pocket 206 has a front opening 212 through which the pillow 204 can be introduced. Retention seams 214a, 214b are stitched proximate to the front opening 212 making the width (W2) of the front opening 212 less than the width (W) between the side seams 210a, 210b. In one embodiment, the retention seams 214a, 214b are about 3 to 4 inches long and are spaced about 2 to 3 inches rearward from the front opening 212.

FIG. 7 shows a front side elevation view of the support 200 and FIG. 8 shows a view of the support 200 along section 8-8 in FIG. 6, which is rearward of retention seams 214a, 214b. It will be appreciated that the front opening 212 is constricted by the retention seams 214a, 214b. Once the pillow 204 is fully positioned in the pocket 206 and clears the retention seams 214a, 214b, the retention seams 214a, 214b inhibit movement of the pillow 206 out of the pocket, such as might be caused by the movements of a patient lying on the pillow 204.

Moreover, to further facilitate retention of the pillow 204 in the pocket 206, the pillow 204 and the pocket 206 are similarly dimensioned so that there is little relative movement between the pillow 204 and the sham 202 when the pillow 204 is inside the pocket 206. For example, in one embodiment, the width of the pillow 204 can be between substantially 28 and 39 inches, the length can be between substantially 18 and 23 inches, and the depth (height) can be about 5 to 10 inches. In one embodiment the pillow is 28 inches wide, 18 inches long, and 6 inches deep (high), and is used in a sham having a pocket that is 29 inches wide, 23 inches long, and 6 inches deep.

In one embodiment, the lengths (L3) and (L4) of the extensions 208a, 208b is the same as the length (L) of the pocket 206. Thus, the length of the extensions 208a, 208b can be between 18 and 23 inches. Also, in one embodiment the combined widths (W2) and (W3) of the extensions 208a, 208b is at least equal to the width (W) of the pocket 206 between the side seams 210a, 210b. Moreover, in one embodiment the ratio of the width (W) of the pocket 206 to the overall width of the sham is approximately equal to or less than 1:2. In one embodiment, the combined width of the extensions 208a, 208b and the pocket 206 is between 62 and 84 inches. The ratio of the total width of the sham 202 (i.e., combined width of the extensions 208a, 208b and the pocket 206) to the length (L) of the pocket 206 is at least 3:1. In one embodiment the widths (W2) and (W3) of extensions 208a, 208b are the same.

In one embodiment, pillow 204 is formed from a latex or a polyester foam that will not compress more than about 50% of its height. In another embodiment, pillow 204 is formed from an air cushion material having a plurality of regularly spaced air cells arranged in a grid or matrix which is rolled into a bolster.

In use, the pillow 204 (optionally placed into a pillowcase) is inserted into the pocket 206 of the sham 202 and the support 200 is placed horizontally across the mattress of a bed so that the pocket 206 and the pillow 204 are positioned between the sides of mattress. The extensions 208a, 208b are then wrapped around and tucked under the mattress to retain the support 200 in place with respect to the mattress. When the support 200 is so positioned, for example, a patient can lay over the support 200 on the mattress with legs supported by the pillow 204 in the pocket 206, thereby preventing pressure on the heels of the patient. Of course, it will be appreciated that the sham 202 can also be positioned with extensions

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208a, 208b located under the mattress with the pillow being initially removed from the pocket 206 and subsequently inserted.

The extensions 208a, 208b may include fasteners (not shown) for attachment to each other or to mating fasteners on a bed or the sheets on the bed (not shown). For example, in one embodiment, the extensions 208a, 208b include snap closures or hook and loop fasteners such that the extensions can connect to each other. Also, instead of connecting the extensions 208a, 208b together, in at least one other embodiment, the bed includes fasteners that can connect to fasteners on the extensions 208a, 208b.

In one embodiment, the sham 202 is made from a material that can be cleaned with antiseptic solution without having to be laundered with hospital bed linen. In one embodiment, the sham 202 is made of a synthetic material, such as polyester or nylon, which may be cleaned with an antiseptic such as an alcohol wipe and which may also be laundered and which may be easily slid under a mattress and over a sheet.

In one aspect, it will be appreciated that by providing a sham with a pocket for a pillow that extends across substantially the entire width of a mattress, the patient cannot position him/herself intentionally or unintentionally to avoid the support.

There have been described and illustrated herein several embodiments of supports and method of fixing the supports. While particular embodiments of the invention have been described, it is not intended that the invention be limited thereto, as it is intended that the invention be as broad in scope as the art will allow and that the specification be read likewise. Thus, while particular shapes, sizes, and configurations of supports, pockets, and seams have been disclosed, it will be appreciated that other shapes, sizes, and configurations may be used as well. In addition, while particular types of fasteners have been disclosed, it will be understood that other types of fasteners may be utilized. Furthermore, while a method for utilizing the leg support and the sacral support has been disclosed with respect to a patient in certain settings has been disclosed, it will be understood that the method can similarly be utilized by a person in a dwelling such as a home or other setting. Further yet, while one embodiment of a support was described with respect to one type of pillow and another embodiment of a support was described with respect to another type of pillow, it will be appreciated that either type of pillow can be used in conjunction with either of the embodiments. Also, while the pockets of the shams were described as having three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side, it will be appreciated that the extent of a side being closed is that it will prevent the pillow from being removed without conscious effort, and the extent of a side being open is that it will permit the pillow to be inserted without undue effort. Further yet, while the supports have been described as having a pocket extending substantially across the entire width of a mattress, it will be appreciated that, while less convenient, the pocket could extend past the top surface of the mattress and extend down the sides and even under the mattress. It will therefore be appreciated by those skilled in the art that yet other modifications could be made to the provided embodiments without deviating from the spirit and scope of the claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A support for use on a mattress, said support comprising: a sham extending longitudinally along an axis and defined by a width along the axis and a length transverse to the axis, said sham having a pocket having three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side defin-

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ing an opening, and extensions extending longitudinally from opposite sides of said pocket, wherein said pocket is configured to receive a pillow therein through the opening and said extensions are configured to wrap around opposing sides of and tucked below at least a portion of a bottom of the mattress to retain said support in place with respect to said mattress, wherein the open side is one of the opposite sides of said pocket and the opening is defined only in the one open opposite side of said pocket, and wherein the opening is adjacent to one of the extensions, and wherein said pillow comprises a matrix of generally spaced air cells having a first portion and a second portion each comprising at least one air cell layer, said second portion comprising vertically stacked air cell layers and said first portion comprising fewer vertically stacked air cell layers than said second portion.

2. The support according to claim 1, further comprising a pillow inserted in said pocket, said pillow having a width substantially equal to a width of said pocket and said pillow having a length substantially equal to a length of said pocket.

3. The support according to claim 2, wherein the pillow is formed from a foam material at least five inches thick and does not compress more than 50%.

4. The support according to claim 3, wherein said width of said sham is between 62 and 84 inches, and said pocket has a width of between 28 and 39 inches.

5. The support according to claim 1, wherein said sham is constructed of a synthetic material that can be sanitized with an aseptic solution without being laundered.

6. The support according to claim 5, wherein each of said extensions has a length that is the same as a length of said pocket.

7. The support according to claim 1, wherein a total width of said extensions is substantially at least as large as a width of said pocket.

8. The support according to claim 1, wherein said pocket has a width, parallel to the axis that is between 28 and 39 inches and said pocket has a length, transverse to the axis, between 18 and 23 inches.

9. The support according to claim 1, wherein the width of the sham is at least three times a length of the pocket.

10. The support according to claim 1, wherein the open side of said pocket extends substantially perpendicular to said axis.

11. A support for use on a mattress, said support comprising:

a sham extending longitudinally along an axis and defined by a width along the axis and a length transverse to the axis, said sham having a pocket having three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side, extensions extending longitudinally from opposite sides of said pocket, wherein said pocket is configured to receive a pillow therein and said extensions are configured to wrap around opposing sides of and tucked below at least a portion of a bottom of the mattress to retain said support in place with respect to said mattress, wherein said pillow is formed of an air cushion material comprised of a matrix of regularly spaced air cells, and wherein said pillow has a body, a curved portion, and a generally flat portion, said curved portion and said gen-

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erally flat portion each having a thickness, the thickness of the curved portion being at least twice the thickness of the generally flat portion, said curved portion comprising a first end of said pillow folded back over a portion of the body of the pillow and attached to said body, wherein the curved portion of the pillow is configured to be located beneath a lower back of a patient and the generally flat portion of the pillow is configured to be located beneath a buttocks of the patient.

12. The support according to claim 11, wherein the pillow is formed as a bolster at least 5 inches thick.

13. The support according to claim 11, wherein each air cell is formed of a pair of oppositely spaced layers of material that are sealed together forming a pocket that is inflated with a gas, wherein each air cell has dimensions of about 1.5 inches wide, 2 inches long, and 1 inch high.

14. A method of placing a support on a mattress, the method comprising:

providing a sham extending longitudinally along an axis, said sham having a pocket having three substantially closed sides and one substantially open side defining an opening, and extensions extending longitudinally from opposite sides of said pocket, wherein said pocket is configured to receive a pillow therein through the opening and said extensions are configured to wrap around opposing sides of and tucked below at least a portion of a bottom of the mattress to retain said support in place with respect to said mattress, wherein the open side is only one of the opposite sides of said pocket and the opening is defined only in the one open opposite side of said pocket, and wherein the opening is adjacent to one of the extensions and said pillow comprises a matrix of generally spaced air cells having a first portion and a second portion each comprising at least one air cell layer, said second portion comprising vertically stacked air cell layers and said first portion comprising fewer vertically stacked air cell layers than said second portion;

placing the sham longitudinally across the mattress; and wrapping said extensions around the sides of and at least the portion of the bottom of the mattress.

15. The method of claim 14, further comprising inserting the pillow into said pocket.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising sliding said sham perpendicularly relative to said axis along the mattress to a desired location.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said sham is constructed of a synthetic material that can be sanitized with an aseptic solution without being laundered and can easily slide along the mattress.

18. The method of claim 14, wherein a width of the sham is at least three times a length of the pocket, the width of said sham is between 62 and 84 inches, said pocket has a width of between 28 and 39 inches, and the length of said pocket, transverse to the axis, is between 18 and 23 inches.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein a total width of said extensions is substantially at least as large as a width of said pocket.

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